Telephone facilities in rural areas

3258. SHRI PRAKANTA WARISA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the targets fixed for the extension of telephone facility in the rural areas of the country during the Ninth Five Year Plan;

(b) the total number of villages which are likely to be provided telephone facility at the end of the Plan; and

(c) what steps are being taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) to (c) The target for the 9th Plan is to extent telecom facility (VPT) to all the 346,764 villages remaining uncovered at the beginning of the Plan. Efforts are being made to achieve the target fully. For this, new technologies are being introduced. More and more rural exchanges are also being installed. About 56,000 villages are to be covered by private fixed service providers also.

Opening of Post Offices in Assam

3259. SHRI PRAKANTA WARISA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of post offices proposed to be opened in the country particularly in Assam during the current financial year;

(b) the number of post offices out of the total number proposed to be opened in hilly areas of the country; and

(c) the details of the proposed locations in Assam?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) The targets for opening of post offices in the country including Assam during the current financial year 2000-2001 are yet to be finalized.

(b) and (c) Post offices are opened subject to justification as per prescribed norms. The opening of new post offices in hilly areas depends upon availability of resources such as funds and sanctioning of posts by Ministry of Finance.